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## NATION

# Beware the 'warrior class'

## U.S. unprepared for emerging threat, Pentagon aide says

By Lewis Post-Dispatch

An Army major says in an influential military journal that the United States may lack the spine to fight its likeliest enemy.

The enemy: a "warrior class" rising around the world as traditional governments fall in places such as Haiti.

"The soldiers of the United States Army are brilliantly prepared to defeat other soldiers," writes Maj. Ralph Peters, who works in the Pentagon as a threat-assessment officer.

In the new issue of *Parameters*, the journal of the Army War College, he writes: "Unfortunately, the enemies we are likely to face through the rest of this decade and beyond will not be 'soldiers,' with the disciplined modernity that term implies, but 'warriors' — erratic primitives of shifting allegiances, habituated to violence, with no stake in civil order."

"U.S. soldiers are unprepared for the absolute mercilessness of which modern warriors are capable," and are discouraged or forbidden from replying in kind.

Peters finds his new breed of warriors all around the globe, from Haiti through the Balkans and the former Soviet Union to the Middle East, Afghanistan and beyond — even the big-city slums of the United States.

His article says the warriors spring from four pools:

- The underclass, whose typical member he defines as "a male who has no stake in peace, a loser with little education, no legal earning power, no abiding attractiveness to women and no power."

- Younger males shunted by the disruption of civil institutions into the underclass.

- Quaintly patriotic, motivated by ideological belief or by personal loss.

- Cashiered military men. They're the most dangerous, Peters writes. "These men bring other warriors the rudiments of the military art — just enough to inspire faith and encourage folly."

The problem gets worse all the time, he writes. "If the current trend toward national dissolution continues," he says, "by the end of the century there may be more of

those warriors than soldiers in armies worthy of the name."

The former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union alone "are vast training grounds for the warriors who will not be content without a conflict somewhere," Peters writes.

To counter such "warriors," Peters writes, the Army must shape up its intelligence gathering. While traditional intelligence crams facts into rigid geographic categories, he says, warriors roam.

Second, he says, intelligence officers must set aside their preoccupation with numbers and weaponry. Instead, he says, they must start reading books that explain human behavior and regional history.

Finally, he says, the Army must ask whether it can summon up the level of violence it needs.

If so, he writes, "This type of threat generally requires a two-track approach — an active campaign to win over the populace, coupled with irresistible violence directed against the warlord(s) and the warriors. You cannot bargain or compromise with warriors."

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